

give out grants on a competitive basis if we're going to go around it and give out our own grants from Congress? It just doesn't seem right.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Indiana is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the recognition, and I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment to strike funds in this bill for the meteorological equipment for Valparaiso University.

I first want to thank the chairman of the subcommittee Mr. MOLLOHAN, as well as the ranking member Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, for their consideration of this important project.

Mr. Chairman, this earmark is relative to two issues. The first is the safety of people who live throughout the Upper Midwest.

A key element to strengthening Valparaiso's meteorology program, as the gentleman from Arizona is correct that Valparaiso is an exceptional university, is the acquisition of Doppler radar. Doppler radar at VU will be very beneficial to the millions of people living along the southern shore of Lake Michigan because that area is currently underserved by pinpoint weather forecasting. In addition to Doppler radar, VU will begin daily weather balloon launches. As the only balloon site in Indiana, Valparaiso University will supply critical data to the meteorological community.

The notoriously unpredictable weather conditions in this area, lake-effect snow in the winter and severe thunderstorms and tornados in the spring and summer months, make the presence of Doppler radar and data gathered from the balloon station critically important to the region.

The amendment also deals with the issue of strengthening our future by investing in science and the young people in our Nation. The global economy is nothing if not competitive, and in order for the United States to remain at the forefront of scientific innovation, we must work with our universities to develop and maintain world-class scientific programs.

Valparaiso is currently home to a nationally ranked meteorological program, and we must leverage this resource to advance our national scientific interests, and I believe the university is well positioned to use the funds to continue to be a national and global leader in this field.

The procurement of the latest industry standard equipment by VU's meteorological program is also vital to helping students become familiar with the technology they will encounter after graduation as they go on to pursue careers that include the Air Force, NASA and the National Science Foun-

dation. The purchase of new equipment will enable Valparaiso students to conduct more undergraduate research, as they will have access to a greater variety of data and the ability to archive it.

I strongly oppose the gentleman's amendment, and again thank the Chair and ranking member.

Mr. Chairman, I will yield back my time.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from West Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. First of all, let me compliment the gentleman from Indiana on his project. We are here arguing, debating, describing, justifying, and questioning the merits of this particular project. However you want to describe it, the gentleman who offers the amendment, his basis of offering these amendments is, on the one hand, that we shouldn't be doing this. We talk about that on almost every amendment, the fact that indeed it is the job of the United States Congress and particularly the House of Representatives in the first instance under Article I of the Constitution to do just exactly this. This is our job. This is what we do—we provide funding for the United States of America.

The gentleman, I'm paraphrasing, said one Member of the body or of the Appropriations Committee or one Member of the Congress brings a project forward. Well, there's nobody in the Congress who would bring a project forward for this gentleman's congressional district if it were not this gentleman.

And then we get to the merits of the particular project. This one seems eminently justifiable; funding for equipment to train young people in forecasting. If you believe in government participation in education, that's what we do, and this is how we can empower this institution, this educational institution, so that they can bring excellent training for weather forecasting, which I think we all have to stipulate is extremely important for the Midwest in light of the kind of weather conditions they have.

So let me compliment the gentleman from Indiana for his project, and for bringing it to us. We have looked at it carefully, and perhaps we should say thank you to the gentleman who raises the amendment for giving the gentleman from Indiana an opportunity to stand up and discuss and describe his amendment for us and for his constituency.

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Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chair-

man, let me associate myself with the remarks of Chairman MOLLOHAN.

I have every confidence, and even more so, from hearing from the gentleman from Indiana, that this project has merit. He has had the opportunity to expand on what we saw in a digested form, and I think he has made a strong case for this project. He is willing to put his name on the project, which means his integrity is backing that project.

I salute him for what he is doing. I oppose the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

Mr. FLAKE. Let me simply say that it's often said through earmarking we are simply asserting our right and the responsibility we have as Members of Congress under article 1. Under article 1, we certainly have the power of the purse.

The problem is, I think the contemporary practice of earmarking, when you bring a bill to the floor that has over 1,500 earmarks, you diminish that responsibility that you have, because we go around or circumvent the careful process of authorization, appropriation, and oversight that is a time-honored practice and hallmark of this institution. When we earmark, we get away from that and not enhance it. That's the reason for bringing these amendments forward.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Reclaiming my time, and just for the record, the bill has approximately 1,100 earmarks, which is about one-fourth of what we had last year. We are, indeed, making some progress in reducing the number.

In any case, Members come forward to defend their earmarks, which I think is entirely appropriate. There is far more transparency, far less in the way of earmarks. I think the process has been vastly improved.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FLAKE

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. FLAKE:

At the end of the bill, before the short title, insert the following new title:

TITLE VII—ADDITIONAL GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 701. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for the National Textile Centers.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Chairman, this amendment would prohibit funding for the National Textile Center. The earmark description in the various certification letters submitted to the committee by various sponsors, and this is one that is sponsored by a number of Members, I understand, says that the earmark will fund the development of a National Textile Center; specifically, the funds will be used to conduct research and development and improve technologies.